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LAW AND LITERATURE

VOLUME I

Professor Simon Stern

Fall 2007

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Perhaps she recalls the revolutionary love scenes of his films, the arranged views of passion lighted artfully, draped with swaths of sheet, buttressed by mounds of pillows. Perfection. Shoulders, backs, legs, breasts, kisses, caresses, ecstasy, soft focus, low light. A dream come true.

"Well, O.K.," she says.

It will be a simple matter: these things are always simple matters. They won't go anywhere, really. Her house, his room. Yves reaches for Clea's hand, heading for the door.

Near the door the woman in the rose hat stands facing the other way, talking to the festival chairman, a bespectacled and intense young professor. As Roland passes her, he seems to trip, go off balance, but in fact he has calculated his misstep. He throws a block into the woman's elegant black silk back. She says "Oh!" and lurches forward, her hat jarred from its place and her wine spilling onto the chairman.

The chairman mutters through his teeth, "What a clumsy bastard." He is disgusted. Yves Roland isn't holding up his end of the deal.

Yves continues toward the door, reaching for Clea's hand, as though it is a magnet pulling him against his wishes.

"Mr. Roland," the chairman says, "it's early."

"I'm sorry, I never learn about red wine. Dreadful headache," he lies, stepping backward toward Clea. Yves is now in the hall. Clea is ahead of him, he is still reaching for her hand, practically running. It is as though they are in a silent high boxwood maze. Sound is irrelevant. All that matters is movement, action, and what lies directly ahead.

The chairman leans out the door. "Your envelope—" he says, waving as though he's flagging a train.

"You can mail me the check," Yves calls back to him. Whether they do or not makes no difference. It is, after all, only money.

American Express

JAMES SALTER

It's hard to think of all the places and nights, Nicola's like a railway car, deep and gleaming, the crowd at the Un Deux Trois, Billy's. Unknown brilliant faces jammed at the bar. The dark, dramatic eye that blazes for a moment and disappears.

In those days they were living in apartments with funny furniture and on Sundays sleeping until noon. They were in the last rank of the armies of law. Clever junior partners were above them, partners, associates, men in fine suits who had lunch at the Four Seasons. Frank's father went there three or four times a week, or else to the Century Club or the Union, where there were men even older than he. Half of the members can't urinate, he used to say, and the other half can't stop.

Alan on the other hand was from Cleveland, where his father was well known, if not detested. No defendant was too guilty, no case too clear-cut. Once in another part of the state he was defending a murderer, a black man. He knew what the jury was thinking, he knew what he looked like to them. He stood up slowly. It could be they had heard certain things, he began. They may have heard, for instance, that he was a big-time lawyer from the city. They may have heard that he wore $300 suits, that he drove a Cadillac and smoked expensive cigars. He was walking along as if looking for something on the floor. They may have heard that he was Jewish.

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